PUEBLO HOLDUP HIT BY JOHNSON

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Says 11-Month Detention of Crew Unjustified

WASHINGTON (AP) — The text of a statement by President Johnson Sunday night on the release of the crew of the Pueblo by the North Koreans:

"I am deeply gratified that after a long eleven months of totally unjustified detention by the North Koreans, the crew of the USS Pueblo have been freed. They should be reunited with their families in time for Christmas, and I am happy for them that their time of ordeal ends on a note of joy.

"I want to pay tribute also to the patience and courage of these relatives while their husbands, fathers and sons were held by the North Koreans.

"The negotiations at Panmunjom were cruelly drawn out and I am grateful for the understanding which the Pueblo families showed through the long and painful period during which their Government has sought to free the crew.

"I must express my deep sorrow over the death of one crew member, Seaman Duane D. Hodges, who was killed while endeavoring to carry out his duties during the seizure of the ship.

"I also want to thank our negotiator at Panmunjom, Major General Gilbert H. Woodward. He carried out his difficult and successful assignment with distinction and has preserved the integrity of the United States while obtaining the release of the men of the Pueblo."